

INFANT and CHILD HEALTH

Healthy Child Care Georgia

What is the purpose of the program?

Healthy Child Care Georgia aims to improve the health and well-being of children in child care through promoting safe, healthy environments and practices for all children, including those with special needs.

What does the program do?

Healthy Child Care Georgia promotes healthy and safe practices in child care by educating Georgia childcare providers about national standards, and providing them with health and safety training, resources and information. The program trains local and regional Child Care Health Consultants, who are available to child care providers to advise on health and safety issues within child care settings. Collaborative efforts with government and community-based programs expand the enrollment of uninsured children in Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids.

How many people are helped by the program?

In Georgia, 67% of children birth to 12 years of age--over 800,000 children--live in homes with either both parents working or with a single working parent. Many of these children are cared for by approximately 32,000 child care employees in more than 2900 licensed child care centers and group day care homes, 5700 registered family day care homes and 3,400 informal/unregulated providers. In addition, the number of Georgia children who need childcare continues to grow as a function of the increasing number of women working outside the home as well as overall state population growth.

Why is the program important?

Access to safe, healthy, high-quality child care is a significant issue to Georgia's working families. Quality care has been shown to improve cognitive performance, school readiness, and parent-child relationships. Yet only 7% of Georgia child care centers and less than 1% of family child care providers have reached a level of quality yielding national accreditation, and even fewer reach state measures of high quality. In a time when one out of five poor children miss routine doctor's appointments, the childcare setting is a logical place to link children with health insurance, a medical home, and other resources. It can be a focus for information on asthma control, safe transportation, immunization, SIDS risk reduction, good nutrition, behavioral health, child development, educational opportunities, and other topics of interest to childcare workers and parents. Child care providers can be encouraged to safeguard children by improving health and safety, preventing injuries, improving the play environment, and including children with special needs.

Where are services located?

Educational services are available statewide to childcare providers and parents via conferences, trainings and the DPH website. Child Care Health Consultant training is offered to district public health nurses and professionals providing training and technical assistance for child care providers, such as Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Cooperative Extension Services, and others.

Outcome measures

Program outcomes are measured concerning the number of child care providers reached through training and having access to Child Care Health Consultants.

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